

**CARES Commission**



Department of Veterans Affairs  
CARES Commission  
Capital Asset Realignment for Enhanced Services

**Hearing Chair Commissioner Chad Colley  
Commissioner Vernice Ferguson  
Commissioner Dr. John Kendall  
Commissioner Dr. Richard McCormick  
Commissioner Robert Ray**

**September 18, 2003**

El Paso VA Soldiers Hall, Building 2, Fort Bliss, TX  
9:00 am - 1:00 p.m.

**TOPIC: Review of the Draft National CARES Plan for VISN 18**

The CARES Commission is an independent commission chartered with the responsibility to provide the Secretary with recommendations on the Under Secretary for Health's Draft National CARES Plan. The Commission may accept, modify or reject the recommendations in this draft plan. In making its recommendations, the Commission will consider information gained through site visits, written comments from all stakeholders and public hearings.

Witnesses submitted written comments prior to the hearing in accordance with procedures of a public hearing. Witnesses are grouped in panels to present comments. Witnesses, except the Network Director, are asked to adhere to a five-minute statement so Commissioners will have time to ask questions of the witnesses. Questions for panelists will be limited to the Commissioners.

Everyone is encouraged to submit written comments on the Draft National CARES Plan until October 7, 2003. Comments about this hearing may be submitted today and for the next ten calendar days. Outside of the hearing room, computer operators are available to assist individuals in preparing written comments to the Commission and will accept hand written comments forms. Additionally, comments on the testimony or the Draft Plan may be submitted on the web site at [www.carescommission@va.gov](mailto:www.carescommission@va.gov), or Marked "Comments" to:

Richard E. Larson, Executive Director  
CARES Commission  
Department of Veterans Affairs  
810 Vermont Avenue, N.W. (00 CARES)  
Washington, D.C. 20420

Or via facsimile at (202) 501-2196.

**SEPTEMBER 18, 2003**  
**EL PASO HEARING (VISN 18)**  
**WITNESS LIST**

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE –**

**OPENING REMARKS – HEARING CHAIR COMMISSIONER CHAD COLLEY**

**PANEL #1**

Russ McEwen, Mayor, Big Springs, Texas *(No written statement provided)*

**PANEL #2**

Ms. Patricia McKlem, Network Director

James Robbins, MD, Network Chief Medical Officer

John Fears, Director, Carl T. Hayden VAMC & CARES Committee Chair

David Graeber, MD, Chief of Staff, NMVAHCS

Wallace Hopkins, Director, Amarillo VAHCS

Byron Jaqua, Director, El Paso VAHCS

**PANEL #3**

Bill Meeks, Vietnam Veterans of America Texas State Council

Jim DeFoor, Taylor County Veterans Service Officer *(No written statement provided)*

John McKinney, The American Legion

Edwin G. Cooke, Disabled American Veteran *(Unable to attend, written statement provided)*

**PANEL #4**

Susan Fox, Dean, College of Nursing, University of New Mexico

Paul B. Roth, MD, Dean, Scholl of Medicine, University of New Mexico

**PANEL #5**

Thomas R. Wagner, Director, VA Regional Office

**CONGRESSIONAL STATEMENTS**

Joint Letter from Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison, Senator John Cornyn, and  
Congressman Chet Edwards

Joint Letter from Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison, Senator John Cornyn,  
Congressman Charlie Stenholm, Congressman Henry Bonilla, and  
Congressman Randy Neugebauer

Congressman Stevan Pearce

Congressman Mac Thornberry